

## AGRICULTURE WHITEBOARD

### 1. EPA's McCarthy: Better that USDA tell farmers to up their environmental game

By [Jenny Hopkinson](#)

The Agriculture Department needs to convince farmers that it's in their best interest to employ practices to counter climate change and curb farm runoff, while resolving other environmental issues, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy said today. The message would be better received from USDA, than EPA, she added.

The EPA needs the agricultural industry to make such changes to help the government meet its environmental goals, McCarthy told a session of the James Beard Foundation Food Conference in New York City. EPA officials are working with farmers where they can, but it's often tough to reach them when they have so little time to study new methods, she said. As a result, change is happening slowly.

"There has got to be some wake up calls, some aha moments, where agriculture demands [environmental change] of themselves, because I don't think we are in a position to demand it of them," McCarthy said.

The Agriculture Department is an important part of the equation, McCarthy continued.

"I need [USDA officials] to be advocates for the climate, I need them to understand it's in the farmer's best interest to understand that they can be part of the solution and the damage if they don't take action," she said. "I would much prefer USDA, who is on much more solid ground with their relationship [with farmers], to be the advocate for that than I would EPA. We are just too suspect."

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